



Best Dedicated Solutions Uses SONAR to Help Its Customers and Itself

Introduction

Best Dedicated Solutions (BDS), which is headquartered about 40 miles northwest of Chicago in Vernon Hills, Illinois, has two companies operating under its umbrella. Best Dedicated is an asset-lite brokerage and Best Courier focuses on asset-based last-mile movements and other deliveries for local routes.

As an asset-lite brokerage, BDS has 300 trailers that the company owns or leases. These are used in Best's drop-trailer program for customers. Best projects revenue of about \$100 million for the brokerage in 2021.

The company operates in the 48 contiguous states, as well as in Canada and Mexico. Because Best is based in Chicago the company has a robust network in the Midwest. SONAR helps company representatives monitor the network, and also focus on those markets (such as Chicago and Atlanta) that can have the largest impact on the company.

How Best Uses SONAR

Best Dedicated Solutions has been using FreightWaves SONAR for about 18 months, and Pricing Manager Brandon Monie is responsible for staying on top of market data at a high level. Among other responsibilities he must ensure that key people at Best are alerted to the "big picture" - what is going on in the company's key markets (are they tightening or getting looser, and are there any black swan events on the horizon that could significantly disrupt the business).

Monie and others in the Pricing Department work on new RFPs, existing or new business market research, day-to-day pricing activities and long-term planning.

Monie chose the FreightWaves SONAR freight forecasting platform for several reasons. The Best management team knows that the freight market is always changing, and SONAR has the most current data and insights available. Each day, SONAR gives Monie and others at BDS deep insight into the freight world that the company previously could not access. With SONAR the team receives ongoing updates to the current state of the market on a market-by-market, lane-by-lane basis.

According to Monie, "SONAR provides timely and specific data to the Best team, which gives us the ability to make sounder pricing decisions." When he was asked which SONAR features are used most often at BDS, Monie listed "SONAR indices, Lane Signal, a wide variety of charts and graphs...each of these help give us information that we did not have and could not access previously."

Logging into SONAR each business day, Monie has a "heads-up" on industry-level trends that otherwise would not be visible."

He added, "Best has a great team, and they have excellent tribal knowledge of the company and the industry. With SONAR, we are able to get more specific information that builds on their tribal knowledge. It took a while, but Best staff members take stock of the SONAR data and believe it."



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BRANDON MONIE, PRICING MANAGER

How SONAR Helps BDS Customers

Prior to subscribing to SONAR, BDS employees only had limited internal data to explain market-level changes to customers and prospects. Now, instead of the generalized data that BDS previously had, SONAR helps the company illustrate what is happening on the national or regional level, as well as in specific markets that are important to customers. In short, SONAR data provides proof of market changes. There is granular specificity available on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis.

For example, if BDS is bidding on spot freight in the St. Louis market for Anheuser-Busch, “We need to know what is happening right now in St. Louis,” Monie explained. “If the market is on fire, we will need to price higher. But we can proactively reach out to Anheuser-Busch and let the company know that because of market conditions the pricing is tough. BDS is in a position to provide options that should save Anheuser-Busch in the spot market. That’s the power of SONAR data.”

SONAR has enhanced key customer relationships because it has made BDS more strategic in customer planning. “If freight is piling up at a major port – which it certainly has this year, we can see the impact of that in SONAR and work with our customers on pricing and timing.”

Monie also said, “Being more strategic, we can alert customers to issues that they are unaware of, and provide solutions that help them while also ensuring that our pricing is on target. We can answer RFPs with pricing that is based on current market conditions, not out-of-date information that could hurt BDS and our customers.”

Key SONAR Features That Best Relies On

Using the freight forecasting platform daily, Monie has certain SONAR features that he uses most often. “Among the indices, I use the Outbound Tender Rejection Index quite a bit. Almost all of our key markets are tight; being able to see how they change on a week-to-week basis helps make the BDS pricing function as accurate as possible. The SONAR Headhaul Index helps me better understand the market and explain changes to the team. I love the 3D charts; you can glance at them quickly and understand current conditions.”

SONAR subscribers receive the Daily Lane Planner email Monday through Friday mornings and a Weekly Outlook on Sunday mornings. “I’ve created a BDS version of the Daily Lane Planner... I boil down what’s sent from FreightWaves for the team every morning; the focus is on those key issues that are most important to BDS and its customers.”

The data, analysis and information found in FreightWaves SONAR is assisting BDS in a number of ways. [Click here for a SONAR demo.](#)